

WASHINGTON – Congressman Spencer Bachus (AL-6) said legislation that will provide earlier storm warnings to residents who live in manufactured housing has been approved by a key House committee.

The House Financial Services Committee today unanimously passed CJ's Home Protection Act, which requires all new manufactured and mobile homes to be equipped with weather radios. Bachus, a lead sponsor of the bill, played a key role in moving the bill in his position as Ranking Member on the committee.

In his statement to the committee, Bachus said, "With today's technology, we have the science to predict a severe storm, sometimes as much as a half hour before it arrives. For those in houses which have an interior safe room or basement, this is a comforting fact and can be life-saving. For those in manufactured housing where there is no safe room or basement, we are building a growing number of storm shelters. But these families also need an early warning system to give them time to seek shelter from the oncoming storm."

The bill amends the Manufactured Housing Construction and Safety Standards Act by requiring the installation of NOAA Weather Radios in all new manufactured homes constructed or sold in the United States. The committee agreed on an amendment that will remove liability from the manufactured housing industry should an individual forget to check the radio battery or fail to leave a house in time.

The legislation is named in memory of CJ Martin, a two year old boy who was killed during a tornado in Southwest Indiana in 2005. His family, which lived in manufactured housing, was not able to hear a distant warning signal. The boy's mother, Kathryn, helped pass an Indiana law requiring the installation of weather radios and is working with Bachus and Congressman Brad Ellsworth (D-IN) on a federal counterpart.

"The cost of installing these radios is very small but it will save lives," stated Bachus. He noted that Alabama, like many states, has experienced destructive tornadoes. A tornado in Tuscaloosa County in December 2000 killed 12 people – including nine people who lived in manufactured housing.

Bachus, a strong advocate of tornado safety, is the author of a 2003 law that allows Community Development Block Grant funds to be used for the construction of tornado shelters.

Financial Services Committee Chairman Barney Frank said during today's markup that CJ's Home Protection Act is a candidate for the suspension calendar, signaling passage by the full House.